

Invaders from outer space

Not that the following is really going to happen, but let's allow our imaginations to run a little wild for a few minutes. We'll call this week's column a "what if," for lack of a better term.

For years, science fiction writers have created plots involving aliens from distant solar systems invading Earth because their home planet has been destroyed, or for some reason, is uninhabitable. The various scenarios using this device as a vehicle for excitement and adventure have worked well.

Let's just say a grain of truth is in that premise. That's what makes "what if" stories exciting; somewhere in the plot the author plants a seed of truth to make the tale plausible. In other words, it is "possible" that sometime in the future inhabitants of a distant planet will need a new home for some unforeseen reason. Consequently, they will search the universe for a similar piece of real estate. When they find a desirable destination, they will probably attempt to settle in, whether said heavenly body is inhabited or not. At some point in our lives, we have all seen or read a version of this fictitious scenario. Are you with me so far? Okay, that's good.

Now remember, this is just a "what if." It is no more credible than the wildest of Steven King yarns. We're just fooling about, stimulating our sometimes-sluggish imaginations.

Anyway, let's just say that the space guys are watching us. You know the space guys; I often write about them. They fly around in their little UFOs doing amazing stunts while they take notes about the ridiculousness they observe on Mother Earth. They have no desire to visit our leader, or anybody else for that matter, because they think the human species is fundamentally crazy, and dangerous beyond comprehension. By more sophisti-



You can't beat a system you can't understand

By Sam Bari

cated standards, I believe they are probably correct.

Nonetheless, let's just take a minute to think about why they are watching us. They already know we're nuts. So what do they see that maintains their interest? Why do they find our activities so captivating? After all, as a society, we're not that advanced, technologically or otherwise. We scurry about like a bunch of morons attending to our jobs all week long so we can fill stadiums and pastures on the weekends to watch others play with balls. Granted, that would probably prove entertaining to a sophisticated alien cruising through the universe looking for something to do, but don't you think there's more to it than that? Don't you think the space guys study Earth and its inhabitants for more reasons than amusement?

UFO observers say that alien activity has increased since we've been venturing out into the galaxy, sending space junk and probes around the solar system, and parking a space station in orbit like it was another moon circling our little rock. Maybe they're wondering why we're littering the spaceways with stuff. As far as we know, they don't do that. I do not believe we've found remnants of alien ships circling the globe any time in the recent past. It is possible, I suppose, but I doubt that it's happening.

The space guys could be observing us just to see how we're doing. They might be saying things like:

"It's about time the earthlings got it together. Maybe they'll finally join the intergalactic community and contribute something to the universe. Maybe they'll stop destroying their planet and" . . . Oops! Did I say that? "Destroying their planet," — Hmmm . . . Well . . . we are doing just that, aren't we? I mean, that would be difficult to deny if a space guy came down and asked us about, shall we say, irresponsible management of our ecosystems.

Could it be that the space guys are concerned about humans looking for a new home in the not too distant future? In the science fiction stories, Earth was always the victim. We were the ones fighting off the invading evil aliens. However, that does not seem to be the case now does it? The science fiction writers had the idea right, but their premise could be off the mark.

When you look at Earth from the space guys' point of view, earthlings might be an endangered species. And the space guys have seen what we do to each other, as well as what we have done to our planet. Why would they not feel threatened? If I were a space guy, I'd view Earth and its inhabitants with a certain amount of trepidations. I mean — we could be the invaders and a threat to life as they know it if we were desperate. As painful as the thought might be, it is possible.

Now, don't take this seriously. I'm not suggesting that it might actually happen. We're just letting our overactive imaginations work a little overtime. Sometimes that's fun. Once in a while, it's a little scary, though, especially if we stumble on a grain of possibly dangerous or unsavory truth. I think that occurs when people spend too much time living in a system they can't understand.

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